



Inquiry into annual and financial reports 2024–25

Answer to question on notice

Asked by: Ms Jo Clay MLA

Addressed to: Minister for Planning and Sustainable Development

Reference: CED

Hearing: 12 November

In relation to: WESTERN EDGE

Question received: 20 November 2025

Answer Due: 27 November 2025

There have been 31 studies into the Western Edge that have been completed with 4 underway.

- (1) Have all of the necessary reports been completed to determine the ecological and environmental issues of land in the Western Edge?
- (2) Have these reports been made available to the Conservator of Flora and Fauna?
- (3) When do you expect to make a decision on the future of the Western Edge for suburban development.
- (4) Of the 31 reports completed only 15 have been placed on the City and Environment website. Can you provide the remaining reports?
- (5) When will these remaining reports be uploaded to the website?

Mr Chris Steel MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

1. No. The completed studies have provided an initial understanding of the values of the area and provide the basis for further detailed studies over the coming years.
2. All the ecological studies / assessments were undertaken in conjunction with the Office of Nature Conservation team, City and Environment Directorate. The Conservator of Flora and Fauna Office was engaged in the scoping of surveys, as required.
3. The Government has not made a decision to develop the Western Edge Investigation Area (WEIA) but is committed to develop a landscape plan for the ACT which will include proactive protection of areas of environmental value in the Western Edge.

In my recent [Statement of Planning Priorities 2025-2028](#), I have outlined the planning actions to protect the environment and enhance the city's landscape. This will include continued work to progress investigations for future urban and other uses in the Western Edge and Eastern Broadacre areas to inform decisions on how the environmental values of these areas can be recognised, managed and protected.

The ACT Government wants to present the outcomes of the investigations as part of a landscape approach for the city in consultation with the community. At the election ACT Labor committed to develop a landscape plan for the ACT which will be led by a new position of the ACT Government Landscape Architect. This will be considered with a refresh of the Planning Strategy this term.

The environmental and other studies underway will help to inform the strategic spatial planning and later decisions about how to proactively protect, conserve and restore the areas identified in the studies on the city's urban interface.

These ongoing studies in the WEIA will contribute to identifying a suitable location for an urban growth boundary.

Whilst I appreciate that some political parties and lobby groups may disagree with these studies being undertaken prior to making a decision, I am confident that our landscape approach, and the evidence base that will underpin it, will provide a robust and transparent basis to inform consultation with the community about conserving the environmental values of the Western Edge.

4. Not all studies result in a formal report. Some ecological studies were delivered as data only, in line with requirements from the Office of Nature Conservation (ONC). In response to the Question Taken on Notice on 12 November 2025, the following update was provided:
 - Most major assessments, including geotechnical, hydrology, ecological review, landscape character, bushfire risk, air quality, engineering constraints, cultural heritage, and contamination assessments, are complete and available on the City and Environment Directorate's Western Edge Investigation webpage.
 - Several studies, such as the Cultural Heritage Assessment, Capability & Suitability Assessment, and Bushfire Risk Assessment, have been partially released under FOI25-048.
 - Additional ecological surveys (e.g., bird surveys, mammal surveys, vegetation mapping, threatened species assessments) are complete, though some were delivered as datasets rather than reports.
 - A small number of strategic studies, including Utilities Serviceability, Strategic Transport Assessment, Social Needs Assessment, Economic and Market Analysis, and Ecological Values and Constraints Assessment, are still underway.

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5. The full list of completed studies and their publication status is available on the Directorate's website, and any remaining reports that can be published will be uploaded progressively as they are finalised and cleared for release.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Environment and Planning

Signature:



Date:

27 / 11 / 25

By the Minister for Planning and Sustainable Development, Chris Steel MLA